Improving Emergency Preparedness – Developing an Environmental Emergency Response Plan

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Background

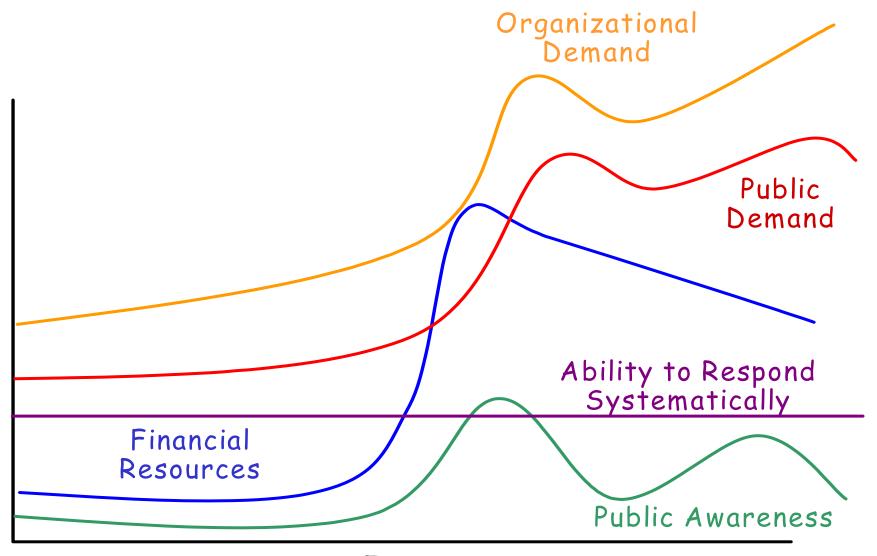
The need for environmental emergency preparedness planning has become especially evident due to several factors including:

- Recent emergencies and other events that have reinforced the need for a systematic, pre-planned response – such as 9/11/01, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and also other lessserious events such as an illness outbreak, power outage, or flood.
- Media and other coverage has highlighted the role of the environmental health practitioner and made the public more aware of their role in environmental emergencies, which increases expectations of the public.
- The State of lowa will be requiring local agencies holding state contracts to develop a working plan.
- Current funding is probably as good as it will ever be for items related to emergency response and preparedness.
- Environmental Division employees need and want to know what their role will be during an emergency.

Problem Statement

The Siouxland District Health
 Department Environmental Division
 responds to emergencies on a reactive
 basis, instead of proactively
 developing a written plan for
 systematic response to events such as
 storms, fires, floods, power outages,
 or illness outbreaks.

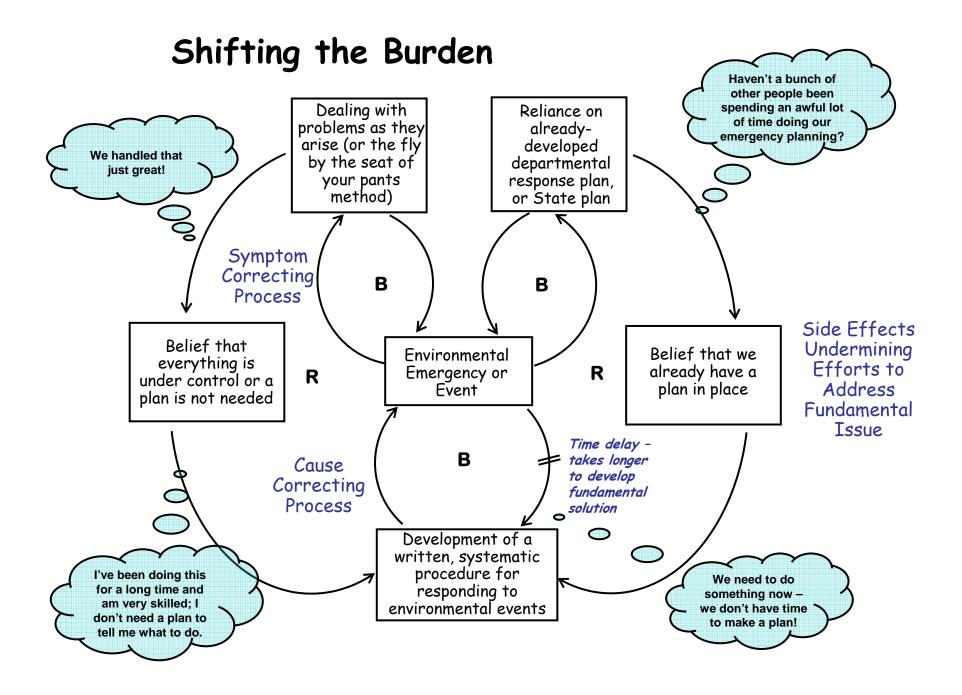
Behavior Over Time Graph



Time

Contributing Factors

- Lack of staff time
- Already experiencing increased workload for most environmental employees
- Development of a Health Department emergency plan that covers primarily illness outbreaks and mass drug dispensing sites leads to the perception that we do have an emergency response plan in place that will cover all events and emergencies
- Lack of a major environmental event within the service region to bring the problem of lack of a response plan to the forefront
- Concern that a written plan would be too rigid and not adaptable to various situations



Program Goal

 To enhance the preparedness and effectiveness of the Environmental Division of the Siouxland District Health Department in responding to environmental emergencies in order to increase safety for the public and environment, and minimize the impact during an event.

Process Objectives

1. By July 31, 2007, complete a draft environmental health emergency response plan including introductory information, response guidelines for particular incidents, equipment inventory and needs, training needs, defined roles and responsibilities, and other necessary information.

Process Objectives

2. By December 31, 2007, complete integration of the environmental response plan with the overall Departmental plan, train environmental employees on the plan, and complete any other implementation steps to ensure a systematic, competent response in the event of an environmental emergency or event.

Resources/Inputs

Departmental Time

Departmental Staff

Funding Sources

EPHLI Resources and Mentor Assistance

State of Iowa Department of Public Health Assistance and Plan Template

Employee Training Opportunities

- SDHD
- IDPH
- FEMA/NIMS

Activities

Completion of draft environmental health emergency response plan

- · Meetings with stakeholders
- Review IDPH template plan
- Meet with SDHD team that compiled the overall departmental plan to determine how the plans will integrate and what needs exist
- · Write actual draft plan
- Inventory equipment and determine additional needs
- Determine training needs for environmental division employees and create training plan
- Determine need and source of funding
- Define roles and responsibilities of division employees in an event response
- · Compile contact directory
- Review draft plan with stakeholders and invite comments
- Revise plan based on comments received

Implementation of the environmental health emergency response plan

- Provide all environmental employees with a copy of the plan
- Train environmental employees on the plan
- Have employees complete necessary NIMS training classes
- Keep complete training records for employees in the environmental division
- Provide IEHA Disaster Field Manual to all employees
- Determine need and schedule for exercising plan
- Determine method and schedule for review and update of plan

Outputs

- # of meetings held and valuable information shared
- Plan content established
- Actual written plan
- List of equipment inventory and equipment needs
- List of training needs
- Established roles and responsibilities
- Written contact directory

Better collaboration and clearly

Outcomes & Impacts

defined roles and responsibilities within the division, department, and community

· More informed environmental

division staff with an increased

awareness of potential events.

appropriate responses and available resources

• Process in place for continued evaluation and improvement

• Continued successful completion of training programs and response exercises and drills

 Increase in employee, departmental, and public confidence in the ability to respond effectively

Results

 Environmental division employees better prepared to systematically respond to environmental events and emergencies

Overall Program Objective

Enhance the preparedness and effectiveness of the environmental division of the Siouxland District Health Department in responding to environmental emergencies in order to increase safety for the public and environment, and minimize the impact during an event.

of trained employees

- Accurate training records
- # of meetings held and valuable information shared
- Exercise schedule
- · Review schedule

National Goals Supported

10 Essential Services

- > Inform, educate, and empower
- Mobilize community partnerships
- Develop policies and plans
- > Enforce laws and regulations
- > Assure a competent workforce
- > Evaluate effectiveness
- > Research innovative solutions

CDC Health Protection goals

- > People prepared for emerging health threats
- CDC National Strategy to Revitalize Environmental Public Health

Thank You!

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